



JIM HOST

Jim Host was the founder of Host Communications, Inc., a world renowned College Sports Marketing & Association Management company which began in 1972 and was sold to IMG in 2007.

Growing up in Ashland, Kentucky, he obtained one of the first two full Baseball Scholarships given by the University of Kentucky in 1955. He majored in Radio Arts graduating in 1959 with an AB degree granted in 1961. He began doing play by play for the student station as well as broadcasting for WVLK while at UK. Jim played one year of Pro Baseball in the Chicago White Sox organization in 1959 injuring his arm close to the end of the year and forcing a retirement from his baseball career. Host put together one of the then 5 UK sports networks in 1959-60, the Kentucky Central UK Sports Network.

He had a varied Business Career from 1962 to 1967 working for Procter & Gamble, becoming a Real Estate Broker with his own firm, owning a General Insurance Agency, and becoming a Home Builder while also continuing to do freelance play by play for UK and High School Sports. He was President of the Kentucky Association of Mutual Insurance Agents and served as a member of the Board of The Lexington Realtors Association during that time.

In 1967, Host became the youngest Cabinet officer for Governor Louie Nunn, serving first as Commissioner of Public Information and Tourism, followed by a term as Commissioner of Parks. In 1971, he ran as the Republican party candidate for Lt. Governor being defeated in the General Election.

In November of 1971, what became Host Communications was begun as Jim Host and Associates over a Barber Shop in Lexington with his first client, the Lexington Tourist and Convention Commission. He served as its first Executive Director which led to the formation of the Lexington Center Corporation and the building of Rupp Arena. Host then served as the first Executive Director of Rupp Arena.

In 1969, Host was the founding Chairman of the Kentucky Horse Park Commission leading to the creation of the Kentucky Horse Park which hosted the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games (WEG) in 2010. He was the Chairman for WEG from 2006 until 2009.

In 1974, Jim Host and Associates acquired the radio rights to UK sports which then led to the NCAA radio network rights in 1975. From there, institutions like Notre Dame, Texas, Michigan, Tennessee, Florida State, and a number of others including Major Conferences like the SEC became clients of Host. His Association Management business also continued to grow as the company began to represent the National Tour Association and the International SPA Association, as well as several others.

In 1983, the company introduced the NCAA Corporate Program. Before this time there was NO licensing of marks or any revenue from Corporate Sponsor Programs in College Athletics. In 1998, Host created NCAA Football, a pennant shaped Mark, to promote the college football game as an alternative to the NFL mark.

Host has been involved with a number of National and Local Civic as well as Business Groups. He has served as President of the Lexington Rotary Club, the Greater Lexington Chamber of Commerce and the Bluegrass Council of Boy Scouts, receiving the Silver Beaver Award.

Host has been a member of the Board of Directors of the National Park Advisory Board, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, Kentucky Sports Authority, Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame and the Louisville Arena Authority which built the KFC YUM CENTER. HE served as its Chairman from 2005 - 2012. He had retired as CEO of Host Communications, Inc. in 2003 to become Secretary of Commerce for the Commonwealth of Kentucky until November 2005 under Governor Ernie Fletcher.

He has received the Kentuckian of the Year Award from the Chandler Foundation, The Champion of Diversity Award from the Louisville Urban League, the Kentucky Broadcasters Distinguished Kentuckian Award, the Hickman Camp Award from the University of Louisville and the University of Louisville Presidential Medal.

Host also was awarded the Louisville Catholic Schools Community Service Award, the Rural Kentuckian of the Year recognition by the Kentucky Rural Electric Co-Ops and was honored at the 25th Anniversary of the Founding of the Greater Lexington Heart Association as a special Honoree with his wife, Pat.

Host has been honored by UK as a member of the UK Hall of Distinguished Alumni, UK College of Communications outstanding Alumnus, Excellence in Public Relations Award from the UK Journalism Department, Outstanding business Leader Award from the UK Gatton School of Business and is a member of the UK Athletics Hall of Fame.

He is also a member of the Travel Industry Hall of Leaders, Bluegrass Business Hall of Fame, National Tourism Hall of Fame, Commonwealth of Kentucky Athletics Hall of Fame, the National Association of Collegiate Marketing Directors Hall of Fame, the Sports Business Journal First Business Champions Class, the Kentucky Entrepreneur Hall of Fame First Class, and the Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame located in Kansas City, Missouri.

He was honored with the National Football Foundation Award for the Top Contribution to Amateur Football in 2014. Host was awarded one of twelve NACDA (National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics) Golden Anniversary Awards in June of 2015 and was inducted into the Ashland, Kentucky Baseball Hall of Fame in August of 2015. He currently serves as a member of the Executive Committee of SOAR (Shaping Our Appalachian Region).

Host holds an Honorary Doctorate from Kentucky State University. He is married to Patricia Quantrell Host and lives in Lexington, Kentucky. Both have 2 children and together have 8 grandchildren.